



Understanding Consumer Food Consumption in the Caribbean

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Food insecurity, nutrition & NCDs in the Caribbean

- Mortality from NCDs in the Caribbean, highest in the Americas
 - 4/10 NCDs deaths under age 70 and are potentially preventable
- Hunger and nutritional deficits co-exist; increase in population overweight and obesity
- Shifts of the global food system demand more processed meals
- Changes in dietary patterns = a nutritional landscape fuelled by junk food
- The fastest increase in ultra-processed food and drink products sales, and in overweight and obesity: Latin America and the Caribbean

“Belly full, but hungry for nutrition”

Food choices reflect historical and traditional factors, with high consumption of salted food and sugars during enslavement, still influencing the unhealthy food choices of adults and children today.



“I know better, but..”

- Consumers and stakeholders are knowledgeable about healthy versus unhealthy foods
- Consumer demand drives what is available for purchase
- Cost and convenience override knowledge
- Accessibility is important but affordability is the bottom line



“Children nowadays doh eat dem tings!”



- Exposure to local produce is a thing of the past
- Children eat what they know (imported fruit and veg)
- Accessibility and marketing to children plays a big role
- Foods introduced in schools, must have follow through at home or children will lose interest in eating them

Invincibility of youth

- Young adults consider themselves protected from noncommunicable diseases due to youth; will change diet when necessary
- Young people with spending power seek to balance health and wellness, with healthy eating being only one aspect of health.



Families rarely eat together

- Sunday lunches are the exception
- Individual family members including children, eat on the run
- Dinner may be all from the same meal (whether prepared at home or food bought/brought home) *but everyone eats at their convenience*



“Fast food” is no longer a treat (but should it ever have been?)

- As a treat now, means more fast foods in larger quantities, particularly on weekends
- Those who work or traverse town, purchase fast food now as their norm
- Fast foods or convenience foods are also popular for persons with long commuting times to work or school; they eat en route.



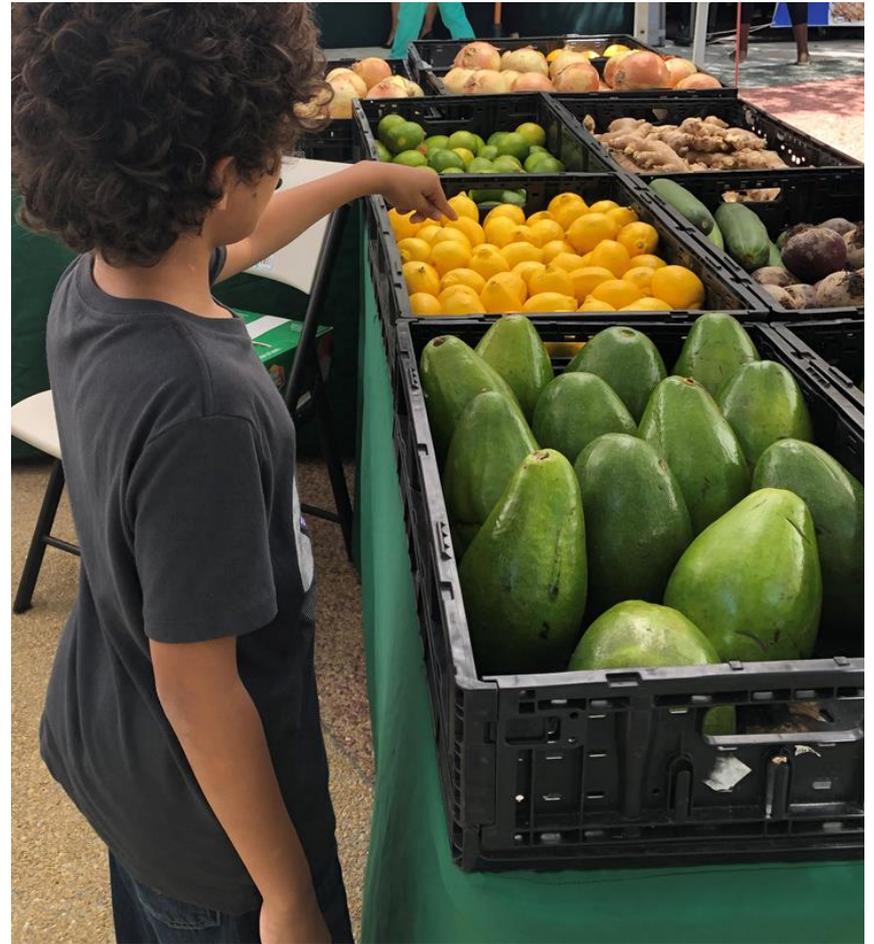
Early (en)forcement of eating healthy foods = rebellion



- The perception of being forced to eat fruits and vegetables as children led to adults eating them less because now, they have choice
- Many adults would not force their own children to eat items that they didn't want to eat, based on their past childhood experiences.

Is eating local healthier?

- Concerns about pesticides and other chemicals
- Buying local convenience foods seen as better but how are those prepared?
- How are meals portioned?



“We” need to....

create consumer demand for nutritious options:

- engage convenience food providers to prepare nutritious options that are appropriately portioned
- make the cost of local un-processed foods competitive with that of imported foods
- be mindful of our messaging and marketing healthy and nutritious foods including having a holistic health approach

Interventions around increasing childhood consumption of healthy, local produce should have a heavy emphasis on exposing children to healthy, local produce **in as many settings** as possible, along with enough information to allow them to make healthy **choices**



Thank you!



Research Partners & Collaborators

UWI:

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